

Developmental Disabilities Council
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Date: January 17, 2008

Meeting: Governance Committee

Reading Number: 08-G-03

Issue: Parents who have developmental disabilities

Included in this reading: First draft of policy statement

Background/Summary:

At the last meeting, John Lemus asked that the Council develop a policy statement on the issue of parents who have developmental disabilities. Attached is the first draft of a statement.

Action: Discussion

Policy: Parents who have developmental disabilities

Draft 1: December 7, 2007

Findings:

A developmental disability, under the federal definition, is characterized by life long functional limitations in three or more life areas that are expected to last a lifetime and occur before a person reaches the age of 22.

The life areas include: self-care, receptive and expressive language, learning, mobility, self-direction, capacity for independent living and economic self-sufficiency.

It is the vision of the DD Council that a developmental disability is a natural part of human life and the presence of a developmental disability does neither diminish a person's rights nor opportunity to participate in life.

For those who choose, individuals with developmental disability may have children and assume the responsibility of raising them.

The presence of a disability should not hinder a person's choice to have a child.

It is recognized that a parent with a developmental disability may need, from time to time, supports and services to assure successful parenting. In the end, it is the goal of the Council that both the parent is successful and the child grows and matures into a healthy and productive adult.

Therefore, it is the policy of the Developmental Disabilities Council that parents with developmental disabilities receive the support and training they need in their responsibility of raising a son or daughter.

The DD Council further expects that:

Professionals working with the parent should be qualified, through training and experience, in providing supports and services to a person with a developmental disability.

When professionals from other disciplines/fields work with parents who have a developmental disability they should have training and experience working with a person with a developmental disability or enlist the assistance of person/people who are so trained.

If a child is removed from the parent for cases of abuse or neglect, CPS/Courts must timely design a plan, in consultation with the parent and other appropriate persons, to provide the training and habilitative services necessary to restore the child to the parent.

If the parent with a developmental disability is a client of the DSHS/Division of Developmental Disabilities parenting skill

training should be factored in during the parent's annual DDD assessment.

During all planning processes, including but not limited to the Individual Service Plan (DDD) and the Individual Educational Plan should the child also have a disability, reasonable accommodations must be required to assure the full and active participation of the parent with a developmental disability.

Parenting skill training, as needed, should be available to the parent with a developmental disability over the life span of the child's childhood years because needs of the child and parent change during the different stages of the childhood and teenage years.